

His death came as a stunning blow and cast a shadow over the entire State; men and women from every walk of life mourned the loss of North Carolina's First Citizen. Flags were at half-mast all over the State. North Carolina wept. Beautiful funeral services conducted from Trinity Methodist Church in Durham were attended by vast throngs of friends from throughout the State. Streets and highways were crowded with men, women and children who stood with bowed heads and heavy hearts as they watched in silence the long funeral procession as it wound its way to the last resting place of Durham County's favorite son. He was buried in the Cemetery at Mount Tabor Methodist Church, in Mangum Township, near his father and mother, on an elevation overlooking the scenes of his early childhood.

The story of William Umstead's life is not told by a recital of the number of offices he held or the honors he received; it is only partially told by the things that he did in the public view. Many beautiful things have been written, and many beautiful things have been spoken of him, but nothing has been written and nothing has been said that is more beautiful than the life he lived.

It is worthwhile to live the kind of life William Umstead lived. His life was one of devoted service. It will always be an example and inspiration to generations yet unborn. He had a sublime Christian faith that found expression in his early connection with the Church, his constant attendance upon its services and his interpretation of the truths of the Bible as Sunday School teacher, his service to the Church as Steward and as Chairman of its official Board. This faith was the compass by which he charted his course, his anchor when the storms of life beat about him. It sustained and comforted him in all the vicissitudes of life.

By nature he was modest and retiring. He never claimed credit for things done by others. He was open, frank, and fair in all his relations in life. He adopted and applied to his own conduct the principle announced in the Golden Rule. The same high standards that governed his private life were strictly adhered to by him in public life. He was a man of charming and engaging personality, a delightful companion with a keen sense of humor and warmth of friendship that bound men to him. At times he was stern, severe, and exacting, but only in regard to obligations to be discharged and duties to be performed. He applied the same rigid rule to his own conduct with respect to these matters that he exacted of others.

Governor Umstead was a man of the finest character and ability. He was sincere, courageous, loyal, dependable, honest, just, genuine and patriotic. He worked unceasingly at whatever his hands found to do. He never sought to avoid the hard places or shift to the shoulders of others unpleasant duties. He hated sham and pretense and despised hypocrites and demagogues. He regarded men who would stoop to mislead the people for political advantage as public enemies. He would have chosen defeat at any time in preference to compromise. His public and private life was unblemished.